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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 NEAE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 ACDA-10 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 SSM-05 /093 W
----------211923Z 049075 /44
P R 211615Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2770
INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
YGARA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 1408
USINT BAGHDAD
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
DIA WASHDC
SECDEF WASHDC
USIA WASHDC
USCINCEUR

UNCLAS SECTION 1 OF 2 DAMASCUS 2564

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: PFOR SY UR LE
SUBJ: SYRIAN MEDIA COVERAGE FOR APRIL 20-21 OF ASAD'S VISIT TO SOVIET UNION

1. SUMMARY. HEAVY MEDIA COVERAGE OF MOSCOW VISIT CONCENTRATED ON SEVERAL THEMES:

--STRATEGIC NATURE OF SYRO-SOVIET RELATIONS, ESPECIALLY IN SEEKING JUST SOLUTION TO ME PROBLEM THROUGH EITHER NEGOTIATIONS OR WAR.

--GENERAL SYRO-SOVIET AGREEMENT ON ELEMENTS OF ME PEACE.

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--SYRIA AS "KEY" ACTOR AMONG ARAB PARTIES ENGAGED IN SEEKING SOLUTION TO HE PROBLEM.

WAASYRIA'S CONTINUED ADHERENCE TO ITS "PRINCIPLED" POLICIES, AND IN PARTICULAR ITS DESIRE FOR SOVIET UNDERSTANDING OF ITS HOVES TO RETURN STABILITY TO LEBANON.

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2. MEDIA CARRIED ASAD'S ARRIVAL STATEMENT IN KIEV IN
WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED HIS TALKS WITH SOVIET LEADERS
AS BOTH "POSITIVE AND FRUITFUL." SAME ARTICLE QUOTED
"OBSERVERS" CLAIMING THAT LEBANESE SITUATION OCCUPIED LARGE
PORTION OF ASAD'S TALKS WITH SOVIET LEADERS AND BOASTED
THAT LEBANESE OFFICIAL AND POPULAR CIRCLES WELCOMED
ASAD'S REMARKS IN MOSCOW PERTAINING TO LEBANON.
LEBANESE PRESS REPORTS QUOTED HAILING ASAD'S REMARKS "AS
FIRST POSITIVE SIGN FOR FUTURE OF SOUTH LEBANON.
THESE CIRCLES INDICATED THAT ASAD SEEMS DETERMINED
TO OBTAIN EFFECTIVE SECURITY MEASURES IN SPITE OF
OBSTACLES LOOMING ON HORIZON. THEY STRESSED THAT PRES.
ASAD IS ONLY ARAB LEADER WHO COMPREHENDED PLOT ENCIRCLING
LEBANON, ELIMINATION OF WHICH WILL RESCUE LEBANON
AS WELL AS PALESTINIAN RESISTANCE. DIPLOMATIC SOURCES IN
BEIRUT EXPECTED ASAD'S MOSCOW VISIT WOULD CONTRIBUTE TO
PREPARING MORE FAVORABLE CLIMATE FOR IMPLEMENTING
SECURITY PLAN IN LEBANON." ARTICLE CONTINUED THAT
SYRO-SOVIET UNDERSTANDING ON LEBANON WAS BOUND TO STRENGTHEN
EFFORTS TO ACHIEVE STABILITY.

3. COLUMN APPEARING APRIL 21 IN THAWRA ENTITLED, "LEBANON'S
CASE AND THE SYRO-SOVIET SUMMIT," FOLLOWED SAME LINE.
COLUMNIST WROTE THAT LEBANON HAD OCCUPIED LARGE PORTION
OF TALKS AND THIS CONSTITUTED PROOF OF SYRIA'S DESIRE
TO HASTEN IMPLEMENTATION OF SECURITY MEASURES IN ORDER
TO CONSTRUCT NEW LEBANON U DER LEGITIMATE GOVERNMENT
IN MANNER REASSURING TO BOTH LEZJNESE AND PALESTINIANS.
HE FURTHERHTOTED THAT SYRIA WAS INTENT AON EXPLAINING
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MOTIVES FOR ITS INITIATIVES IN LEBANON TO SOVIETS
"BECAUSE OF ITS CONVICTION AT NECESSITY OF
REACHING CLEAR JOINT UNDERSTANDING." HE CLAIMED THAT
RECEPTION ASAD'S REMARKS RECEIVED IN LEBANON DEMONSTRATED
SYRIA WILL CONTINUE TO ENJOY SUPPORT OF LEBANON "AS LONG
AS IT FAITHFUL TO ITS PLEDGE TO SAFEGUARD LEBANON'S
UNITY."

4. ON THE ARAB-ISRAELI QUESTION, SANA REPORTED APRIL 20
IN DESPATCHES FROM MOSCOW THAT TALKS WERE "CORDIAL AND
CONSTRUCTIVE" AND DEALT WITH BILATERAL RELATIONS AND ME
SITUATION. "REVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL SITUATION WAS CONDUCTED
AND VIEWPOINTS CONCURRED, PARTICULARLY ON ESSENTIAL
COMPONENTS OF JUST ME PEACE." ARTICLES REPORTED FULL
TEXT ASAD'S REMARKS AT BANQUET HOSTED BY PODGORNEY APRIL 19
IN WHICH HE LAUDED SYRO-SOVIET RELATIONS "AS HAVING GROWN
BECAUSE THEY BASED ON PRINCIPLED STANDS AND FAITH IN CAUSE
OF FREEDOM."

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5. THAWRA COLUMN WRITTEN APRIL 20 ENTITLED, "THE MOSCOW
DISCUSSIONS AND THEIR IMPACT ON EFFECTING A JUST SOLUTION"
CLAIMED TOTAL SATISFACTION AT OUTCOME OF TALKS. COLUHN
ASSERTED THAT "THE CONVICTION IN SYRIA HAS ALWAYS BEEN
THAT RELATIONSHIP WITH SOVIET UNION IS STRATEGIC.
THIS ESTIMATION HAS ALWAYS BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT IN
SYRIA'S MOVES, EVEN THOUGH RELATIONS WITH SOVIET UNION
HAVE GONE THROUGH MANY DIFFICULT TESTS AND STAGES FROM
WHICH THEY EVENTUALLY EMERGED SUCCESSFUL." COLUMN CONTINUED
BY NOTING THAT SOVIET UNION HAD ALWAYS SUPPPORTED THE ARAB
STRUGGLE AGAINST ISRAEL AND THAT IT REALISTIC FOR ARABS
TO EXPECT THAT SUCH SUPPORT WOULD INCREASE IN FUTURE.
COLUMN CONCLUDED WITH ASSERTION THAT SOVIET UNION CAPABLE
OF GREATLY INFLUENCING EVENTS IN REGION. IN SAME VEIN
AMID AL-KHULI WRITING IN AL-BAATH STATED THAT AS RESULT
SYRIA'S DETERMINATION TO RECOVER OCCUPIED ARAB LANDS
AND SECURE RIGHTS OF PALESTINIANS, "SYRIAN-SOVIET RELATIONS
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MAINTAIN SPECIAL SIGNIFICANCE TO BOTH WAR AND PEACE IN AREA."

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6. OTHER EDITORIALS STRESSED MUTUALITY OF VIEWS ON NATURE OF ME PEACE. JIBRAN KURIYYA IN TISHRIIN LISTED FOUR POINTS AROUND WHICH SYRO-SOVIET VIEWS COALESCED INCLUDING:

A. NEED FOR COMPREHENSIVE SOLUTION.

B. REJEITION OF SEIZURE OF TERRITORY BY FORCE.

C. NEED TO LIBERATE ALL LANDS OCCUPIED BY 1967.

D. NECESSITY OF INSURING PALESTINIAN PEOPLE CAN EXERCISE INALIENABLE NATIONAL RIGHTS INCLUDING THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION. "AGREEMENT ON THESE PRINCIPLES CONSTITUTES ADEQUATE BASIS FOR JOINT COOPERATION."
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IN REMARKS APPARENTLY MEANT TO REASSURE U.S. KURIYYA WROTE: "DEVELOPMENT OF SYRIAN-SIVIET COOPERATION IS NOT DIRECTED AGAINST ANY PARTY WANTING TO CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVEMENT JUST PEACE IN ME." FINALLY, HE ASSERTED THAT SYRIA'S POLICIES WOULD CONTINUE TO BE INDEPENDENT AND BASED ON ITS NATIONAL AND PAN-ARAB INTE ESTS.

7. SEVERAL EDITORIALS EXPANDED UPON THEME RAISED SEVERAL DAYS EARLIER, WHICH ASSERTED SYRIA'S CENTRALITY TO QUESTIONS OF WAR AND PEACE IN AREA. AMID AL-KHULI IN BAATH APRIL 20 DECLARED THAT, "SYRIA IS KEY TO ARAZ REVOLUTIONARY MOVEHENT. THERE WOULD BE NO RIGHTS FOR PALESTINIANS WITHOUT SYRIA, NOR WOULD THERE BE LIBERATION WITHOUT SYRIA, NOR A JUST PEACE." HE CLAIMED SYRIA WAS RESPONSIBLE FOR UNIONIST MOVES WITH JORDAN, EGYPT AND SUDAN AND EXPOUNDED ON SYRIA'S ROLE IN LEBANON. HE STATED THAT ALL THESE ACTIONS BASED ON SYRIA'S POLITICAL PRINCIPLES. HE HAILED ASAD'S RECEPTION IN MOSCOW AS AFFIRMING "COORECTNESS" OF SYRIAN POLICIES. HE SAW IN ALL THIS THE SUCCESSFUL EMERGENCE OF SYRO-SOVIET RELATIONS FROM RECENT "TESTS".

8. COMMENT: REPORTING OF ASAD'S VISIT COMPLETELY DOMINATES MEDIA. IT HAS BEEN SOME TIME SINCE SYRIAN COLUMNISTS HAVE HAD CHANCE TO LAUD SYRO-SOVIET RELATIONS AND MOST HAVE RISEN TO THE OCCASION. AS NOTED IN OTHER REPORTING NO MENTION MADE OF ANY SPECIFIC AGREEMENTS, BUT MEDIA OBVIOUSLY OPERATING UNDER DIRECTION TO PORTRAY ASAD VISIT AS SUCCESSFUL AND TO EMPHASIZE CLOSENESS OF

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SYRO-SOVIET RELATIONS AFTER ALMOST A YEAR OF
DEEP STRAIN.
PELLETREAU

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Message Attributes

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